

A FACTORIAL STUDY OF ATTITUDES
TOWARD THE NEGRO

BY

ROBERT GRIFFIN SMITH, JR.

B.A., University of Florida, 1942

M.A., University of Florida, 1947

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PSYCHOLOGY
IN THE GRADUATE COLLEGE OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1950

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Attitudes play an important part in influencing the behavior of individuals. Accordingly, knowledge concerning the generality or specificity of widespread attitudes will lead to better understanding and predictions of human behavior. An especially widespread and important attitude for Americans is the attitude toward the Negro. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the generality or specificity of attitude toward the Negro. A survey was made of specific attitudes which had been reported in the literature, and items constructed to measure these. Four attitude scales were constructed according to the method of Scale Analysis. These scales had a general factor in common, which was also identified when the twenty-four items in the scales were factor analyzed. Although there were hints of group factors in addition to the general factor, these could not be clearly identified because of artifacts affecting the correlation when variables having small numbers of categories are correlated. Two possible solutions are proposed. One is to analyse relatively homogeneous tests with a sufficient range of raw scores to minimize this influence. The other is to use a measure which is not restricted by it. The measure proposed is the phi coefficient divided by its maximum value.

When this correlation was used in a factor analysis of the item by scales, the following group factors were identified.

1. Willingness to Admit Negroes to Equal Occupational Status.
2. Willingness to Admit Negroes to Superior Social Status.
3. Willingness to Permit Common Use of Facilities Involving Cleanliness.
4. Attitude Toward Segregation, a factor distinct from the ones just listed.

5. Beliefs Concerning Negro Abilities.
6. Beliefs Concerning Negro Morality.
7. A factor dealing with religious aspects of the Attitude Toward the Negro.

These are in addition to the general factor described above.

The evidence is consistent with the hypothesis that there are, in the domain of attitude toward the Negro, a general factor plus narrower group factors.

VITA

Robert Griffin Smith, Jr. was born on September 25, 1920, at Bainbridge, Georgia. He graduated from H. B. Plant High School, Tampa, Florida, in 1938, and the same year entered the University of Florida, from which, in May, 1942, he received the degree Bachelor of Arts. In 1942 he entered military service. While in the Army he completed the Advanced Personnel Psychology Course of the Army Specialized Training Program at Cornell University in December, 1943. Upon discharge from the Army in 1946, he entered the Graduate School of the University of Florida. He held a Graduate Assistantship there from September, 1946, to September, 1947. He received the degree Master of Arts from the University of Florida in September, 1947. In September, 1947, he entered the Graduate College of the University of Illinois. He held a Teaching Assistantship from September, 1947, to February, 1950. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Psychological Association.

